

**EnvS 001: INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**  
**Spring 2007; Dr. Trulio**

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1: What is Sustainability?**

*General Instructions*

The purpose of this assignment is three-fold. First, it is designed to help acquaint you with the topic of sustainability, a central principle in environmental studies. Second, this assignment is designed to provide specific instruction on correct writing style. Very detailed instructions are given here. Third, this assignment will give you clear direction on how to paraphrase, summarize, and cite information. In other words, you will learn how to avoid plagiarism.

This paper must be typed, using 10- or 12-point font, and must be double-spaced. Allowable font styles include Book Antiqua, Courier, Palatino, or Times New Roman. The word count for this paper should be 300 to 400 words and no more than a page and a half, double-spaced. Paragraphs will be indented five spaces. Give your paper an appropriate title and provide an extra space between the title and the body of your text. Number the pages. Include your name and the date. Spell-check your work and proof read your paper after you spell-check to catch any style, syntax, or spelling errors.

This assignment is due on **Monday, February 5**. If you do not receive at least a “B” on this paper, you are **required** to revise it and turn it on February 28 for a final grade. Grading criteria are given in Table 1.

*Specific Instructions*

**Content.** The informational focus of this paper is the topic of sustainability. Use the information Chapter 1 of Miller (2005), as well as the “Guest Essay” by Paul Hawken on the text book website (<http://www.thomsonedu.com/biology/miller>) under Chapter 1, to address these points:

1. What is sustainability? Give a definition.
2. What is natural capital? Describe the “natural capital” approach to living sustainably.
3. What is the role of non-renewable and renewable resources in achieving a sustainable society using natural capital?
4. According to Paul Hawken, how can a sustainable society/economy be achieved?

Be sure to use appropriate facts, data, and terminology in your paper. Be factual and do not give opinions or value judgments. Avoid redundancy or vague sentences. Be sure each sentence includes new data or ideas that *move the discussion forward*. In other words, be sure each sentence contains a concept or facts relevant to the topic. A vacuous sentence is one such as the following: “Global warming is an important topic because this problem is important to the planet.” To make this a useful sentence, add facts. For example: “Global warming is an environmental issue of international importance because planetary warming may have severe results, such as sea level rise and changes in weather patterns.”

**Style, Construction, and Organization.** This paper must exhibit good sentence construction, syntax, and punctuation. If you are unclear on what constitutes correct writing style, please consult a style manual, such as *A Manual for Writers* by Kate Turabian (1987). The full citation

for this book is: Turabian, Kate L. 1987. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. This book is available in the Spartan Bookstore and in the writing section of most bookstores.

Here are a few important points on sentence construction:

- Every sentence must have a subject and verb. Do not submit incomplete sentences.
- Include only one or two ideas in a sentence. Avoid “run-on” sentences. If your sentence is too long, divide it into two.
- Each sentence must have a purpose and must advance the discussion.
- Use active verbs that require a subject be named. In other words, avoid the passive tense. An example of a passive sentence is, “A pamphlet will be written.” State who will do the writing to make this an active sentence, such as, “The City Fire Department will write a pamphlet describing safe evacuation procedures.” This new sentence also includes valuable explanatory information.

This paper must also exhibit good organization and paragraph construction. Each paragraph must communicate a complete idea with supporting information to clarify or support that idea. Each paragraph must advance the purpose of the paper in a logical fashion, until the title of the paper has been adequately addressed. Here are a few important points on paragraphs:

- Each paragraph must have a topic sentence that introduces the topic to be covered in the paragraph.
- The following sentences must provide data, arguments, or other information that support or elaborate on the paragraph’s topic.
- The next paragraph must follow logically from the last and must begin with a transition that moves the reader from the last paragraph into the new one.
- The final paragraph should briefly summarize the material in the paper and smoothly close the topic.

**Summarizing, Paraphrasing, Quoting, and Plagiarism.** In this paper, you will be taking information written by another author and you will communicate that information in your paper. The goal of the paper is to summarize the material, distilling the most important information in order to make your points. After you locate the most important information, then you must convey the material *totally in your own words*. This process is called paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is what you are doing if you were to describe the information you read in your textbook to a friend.

If your paraphrase is close to the exact words used by another author or if, in fact, you use the exact words of an author without citing that author, then you are plagiarizing. Plagiarizing is a form of stealing and is a punishable offense at San Jose State University. Read the San Jose State University policy on plagiarism on line. This course will follow that policy. You **MUST** avoid plagiarizing. Changing one or a few words in another author’s sentence is **not** paraphrasing; *it is plagiarizing*. If you must use language close to another author’s words, cite that author in the text of your paper. If, however, you must use an author’s exact words because you simply cannot paraphrase them, then you must **quote** those words and then cite the author. Only quote when you absolutely must. To cite an author in the text of a paper, give the author’s name and the publication date, for example (Miller, 2007), and then provide a full bibliographic reference at the end of the paper. For an example, at the end of this handout, see the reference style for the books I cited in this assignment.

In this first paper, I will be reading to see if you understand how to summarize, paraphrase, and avoid plagiarism. If you do plagiarize in this paper, I will give you a second chance to get it right, without penalty. **In future papers, plagiarism will result in NO CREDIT for the paper.** While this penalty may seem harsh, it is essential that you learn now how to avoid plagiarism.

**Citations**

Hawken, P. G. 2007. Guest Essay: Natural Capital. *Living in the Environment, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning: Pacific Grove, CA. url: <http://www.thomsonedu.com/biology/miller>; accessed on January 20, 2007\*.

Miller, G. Tyler. 2007. *Living in the Environment, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning: Pacific Grove, CA.

Turabian, Kate L. 1987. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.

**Table 1.** The following are criteria that you should try to meet in your written work. As these standards show, while content is important, so are writing style and paper format.

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION	GRAMMAR AND STYLE	CITING/REFERENCES	TABLES/DIAGRAMS
Follows instructions	Appropriate Title and Headings	Good Paraphrasing or Summarizing of Information	Proper Style
Logical Organization of Paragraphs	Correct Margins	Use Quotes/Citation for Authors' Exact Words	Proper Citations
Relevancy of Information	Proper Spacing Between Sentences/Paragraphs	Cite Author for Close Paraphrases	Proper Placement
Accurate Information/Correct Terminology	Proper Punctuation	Proper Citation Style	
Lack of Redundancy	Good Sentence Structure		
Few Vacuous Statements	Proper Indents		
Conflicting Views Accurately Represented	Good Syntax, Subject/Verb Agreement		
No Value Judgments	Lack of Typographical and Spelling Errors		
Well-supported Positions	Lists with bullets or numbers		
Reflects Thought and Work	No Widows		
Care in Proofing of Paper	Neatly Presented		
Good Transitions	Number Pages		

\* To access Hawken's essay on this webpage, see the picture of the text. Under that see "Students" and under that see and click on "Companion Site". Under "Chapter 1" on the left menu, click on "Guest Essays". Then open the "Natural Capital" essay.